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Kings County Historical Society

Dedication of monument and altar to liberty on...

[Brooklyn, N.Y.]

[1920]

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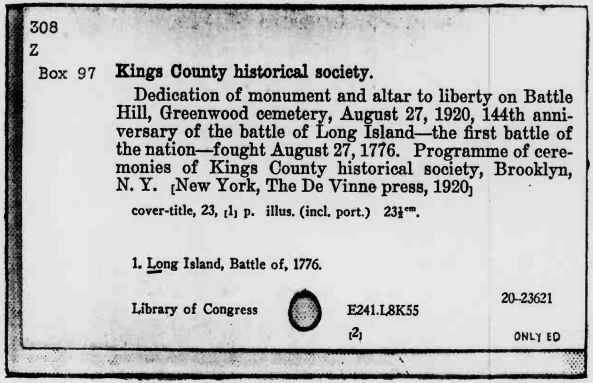

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Box 97 **Kings County historical society.**

Dedication of monument and altar to liberty on Battle Hill, Greenwood cemetery, August 27, 1920, 144th anniversary of the battle of Long Island—the first battle of the nation—fought August 27, 1776. Programme of ceremonies of Kings County historical society, Brooklyn, N. Y. [New York, The De Vinne press, 1920]

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1. Long Island, Battle of, 1776.

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DEDICATION OF

MONUMENT AND ALTAR TO LIBERTY

ON

BATTLE HILL, GREENWOOD CEMETERY

AUGUST 27, 1920

308
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144TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND—THE FIRST BATTLE OF THE NATION—FOUGHT AUGUST 27, 1776

PROGRAMME OF CEREMONIES

BY

KINGS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

DEDICATION OF

MONUMENT AND ALTAR TO LIBERTY

BY KINGS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ON BATTLE HILL IN GREENWOOD CEMETERY, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

AUGUST 27, 1920

144TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND

PROGRAMME OF CEREMONIES

THIS monument is donated by a member of the Society to commemorate the Battle of Long Island, which was fought wholly within the boundaries of Brooklyn on August 27, 1776. This was the first battle of the Nation and the first stroke for our great American Charter of Rights and Liberties—the Declaration of Independence—and was, obviously, the greatest historic event that ever occurred in the City of Brooklyn, and yet this great National, and greatest local, event has remained practically unmarked and unmonumented up to the present time.

The Day We Celebrate
August 27, 1776

"To-day the cannon's thunderous throat
Shall chant in tones sublime
The song that burst in brazen note
From Philadelphia's chime.
To-day the patriot's sworded hand
Shall ratify the pen,
And seal the charter of the land
In blood of honest men."

From Poem by Mr. P. J. Coleman on Battle of Long Island. Awarded First Prize by Brooklyn Institute, 1913.

Jan. 1, 1923

HAIL YE HEROES!

GLORY to our First National Heroes who fought and fell on Greenwood's Hills and Slopes in our first National battle, and there shed the first blood for our National Liberty and Independence.

"Hail ye heroes—Heaven born band!
Who fought and bled in Freedom's Cause.
Let Independence be your boast,
Ever mindful what it cost,
Ever grateful for the prize,
Let its Altar reach the skies!"

PLATE I
Front View of Monument facing West.

DESCRIPTION OF PLATE I

IN this Monument a square Grecian Altar, carved in granite, and having bronze plates with historic inscriptions on the four sides, is erected on Battle Hill in Greenwood Cemetery on a high elevation overlooking the cities of Brooklyn and New York and the waters of New York Harbor. The Altar is of strictly classic design and rests on a base and subbase of granite forming two steps or terraces leading up to the Altar. The figure of Minerva, the Goddess of Wisdom, Glory, and Patriotism, cast in bronze, stands beside the Altar and faces directly toward the towering Bartholdi Statue of Liberty arising in New York Harbor in the mid-distance. Minerva salutes the Goddess of Liberty with one hand upraised, while the other hand places a wreath of laurel upon the Altar in tribute to the Wisdom of our American institutions as expressed in the Declaration of Independence, and to the valor of our first National Heroes who fought and fell on this sacred battle-ground to establish these institutions.

Inscription on the Front Side of the Altar facing West toward the Statue of Liberty on Liberty Island in New York Bay

ALTAR TO LIBERTY
1776–1919

ON THIS BATTLE HILL, FACING THE STATUE OF LIBERTY, THIS ALTAR IS ERECTED TO COMMEMORATE THE BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND, THE FIRST ENGAGEMENT OF WHICH WAS FOUGHT ON THIS SITE, AUGUST 27, 1776, BETWEEN GENERAL LORD STIRLING WITH 2000 AMERICANS AND GENERAL GRANT WITH 6000 BRITISH. THIS WAS THE FIRST BATTLE OF THE NATION AND THE FIRST STROKE FOR OUR GREAT AMERICAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES—THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

ERECTED 1919

INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE

PLATE 1
Front View of Monument facing West.

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ERECTED 1919

PLATE 2
Side View of Monument facing South.

INSCRIPTION ON PLATE 2

ON SIDE OF MONUMENT FACING SOUTH

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

JULY 4, 1776

THE WISEST DOCUMENT EVER WRITTEN OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES, BASIC ETHICS, CIVIC RELIGION AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT. ALL THESE ARE EXPRESSED IN THIS ONE ESSENTIAL PARAGRAPH:

"WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF EVIDENT, THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, THAT THEY ARE ENDOWED, BY THEIR CREATOR, WITH CERTAIN UNALIENABLE RIGHTS, THAT AMONG THESE ARE LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS. THAT TO SECURE THESE RIGHTS, GOVERNMENTS ARE INSTITUTED AMONG MEN, DERIVING THEIR JUST POWERS FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED."

EQUALITY—LIBERTY—HUMAN RIGHTS.

INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE

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EQUALITY—LIBERTY—HUMAN RIGHTS.

PLATE 3

Back View of Monument facing East but looking West over the City of Brooklyn in the foreground, with New York Bay and the Statue of Liberty in the mid-distance, and the hills of New Jersey in the far distance.

DESCRIPTION OF PLATE 3

IN this Plate it will be noted that the Statue of Liberty is shown arising in New York Harbor in the center of the panoramic view and in direct line with the Monument and Altar to Liberty on Battle Hill in the foreground. It will also be here noted that the face of the Statue of Liberty is not turned toward New Jersey or Manhattan but toward Brooklyn, and that the beams from the Torch of Liberty and Enlightenment are directed over the shores of Brooklyn and the hills and slopes of Greenwood to show where our National Liberty was first fought for and virtually won.

Our great ally in the Revolution—the People of France—who gave us this noble Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World, and placed it centrally in our harbor with its face turned toward Brooklyn and Greenwood, seem to have well known where our National Liberty was first fought for in actual battle and thus pointed out to us where we should, long ago, have placed an answering monument of our own. The monument now erected facing the Statue of Liberty is not only a monument to the greatest event in our own local history and to one of the greatest events in our National history, but is an answering and reciprocal monument to the Statue of Liberty and to the noble People of France who so ably helped us to win our Liberty in the War of the Revolution. And we can now feel that a Patriotic and Historic duty long incumbent on us to duly mark, sanctify and monument one of our greatest historic shrines is now met and fulfilled in this answering and sanctifying monument which now faces the Statue of Liberty from one of the highest hilltops on our first National battle-ground where our first National Heroes fought and fell for American Liberty and Independence.

Inscription on Plate 3 on Back or East Side of Monument:

"THE PLACE WHEREON THOU STANDEST IS HOLY GROUND"

GLORY TO THE MEMORY OF OUR FIRST NATIONAL HEROES WHO FOUGHT AND FELL ON THIS BATTLE-GROUND TO WIN OUR LIBERTY AND INDEPENDENCE! MINERVA, THE GODDESS OF WISDOM, GLORY AND PATRIOTISM, HERE SALUTES THE GODDESS OF LIBERTY AND ENWREATHES THIS ALTAR IN TRIBUTE TO THE HEROES OF AMERICAN LIBERTY AND TO THE WISDOM OF AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS.

INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE

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PLATE 4
Side View of Monument facing North.

Inscription on Plate 4 on North Side of Altar:

STIRLING'S VOW

"Here and along the slopes of Greenwood's hills
Our patriots for the first time faced their foe
In open field; and well we stood the test.
'Men!' cried Lord Stirling, as we formed our line,
'This Grant who comes against us once declared
In England's House of Commons—I sat there
And heard—that given him five thousand men
He'd cross our continent from end to end!
He has his number now, I doubt not; we
A fourth as many, yet I promise you
He'll march no farther through our continent
Than Brower's mill ponds yonder.'"

From Prize Poem by Sarah J. Day, 1913.

HISTORIC NOTES:—The inscription on this North side of the Altar entitled "Stirling's Vow" is taken from the Prize Poem on the Battle of Long Island by Miss Sarah J. Day, of Brooklyn, a graduate of Packer Institute, to whom the second prize for the best poem was awarded by the Brooklyn Institute in 1913. This inscription recites one of the most heroic, critical and significant events in American History and deserves close attention. Here on Greenwood's hills and slopes, at the opening of our first National battle, General Stirling took up the taunt and boast of the British general Grant that he would cross our continent from end to end, unchecked, and crush out our rebellion with five thousand men! And Stirling soon proved, as he had vowed, that Grant—at least for that day and some time after—would get no farther through our continent than "Brower's mill ponds yonder." These historic mill ponds, now filled in and obliterated, were located about one mile north of Greenwood near the "Old Stone House of Gowanus," in the vicinity of Third Street and Fifth and Third Avenues. This point was near the center of the American lines and was the most strategic point in the whole battle-field. General Stirling held General Grant in a hot en-

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gagement for a while at Greenwood and then made a quick retreat toward this strategic center and took up his position near the Old Stone House and in front of the mill ponds. The bridges over the mill ponds, which led to the center of the American lines, having been burned by this time, to prevent the passage of the British, Stirling now ordered the main body of his force, comprising the Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania regiments, to retreat by wading and swimming across the Gowanus Creek and marshes into the American lines on the opposite side of the Creek where Washington was stationed with the main army. But Stirling, like Leonidas of old, kept with him on the fighting front the choice and flower of our little army, the Maryland regiment, numbering about 300 to 400 men, who, like the Spartans at Thermopylæ, would not retreat but covered the retreat of their other regiments and then sacrificed themselves for American Liberty to the number of two to three hundred in violent and repeated assaults on the British under General Grant and Lord Cornwallis, who had now concentrated at this strategic point.

Stirling was finally forced to surrender to this overwhelming force thrown against his right and left, but not before his "vow" was fully carried out in there checking the concentrated attack of the enemy and preventing their passage farther than "Brower's mill ponds yonder."

The British plan of battle was evidently to surround the little American army of nine thousand men with their overwhelming force of thirty thousand veterans, and then close in and crush or capture Washington and his whole army at their convenience. This plan was followed by the Hessians attacking the center through Prospect Park and down the old Porte Road, now First Street, while the divisions under General Grant and Lord Cornwallis attacked Stirling on his right and left on the Gowanus Road in front of the American center near the Old Stone House, with the evident purpose to crush Stirling and his whole force between them and then cross the Creek at this strategic center of the ponds and bridges where the line of defense was weakest and there capture Washington and his main army and thus end the Revolution and the New Born Nation at one blow!

The carrying out of "Stirling's Vow," however, in the manner described, with the heroic work of the brave Maryland regiment, checked this dangerous British plan, thus saving Washington and his main army on the other side of the Creek and enabling him to make his masterly retreat two days later, which saved our young Nation at its very cradling, and at the most critical military

situation ever existing in our national history. It will therefore be seen that "Stirling's Vow," carried out as described, was equivalent to the famous vow of the heroic French at Verdun—"They shall not pass"—which saved the French Nation in the recent world war, as "Stirling's Vow" saved our young Nation at its very borning in 1776.

There is therefore nothing more heroic and significant in our entire military and national history than this "Stirling's Vow," which was uttered at the first engagement of our first National battle on the hills of Greenwood, and carried out in the last engagement of the battle at Gowanus Creek and mill ponds near the Old Stone House of Gowanus.

There are, therefore, no spots more sacred and significant in the history of our Nation than these two sites on which the first and last engagements of our first National battle were fought. Indeed, the whole battle was so important and significant in our history that all critical points in the battle-field should be properly reserved, marked, and monumented so as to fully carry the patriotic and historic lessons of Americanism taught by this battle to the present and future generations. Fortunately the city is already in possession of two of these important sites in the battle-field. The first of these is Prospect Park, where the second engagement was fought between the Americans under General Sullivan and the Hessians under General De Heister, and where a proper marker or monument can be erected at "Battle Pass" or elsewhere without much expense, as no ground will have to be bought for this purpose. The second site is in Fort Green Park near the Wallabout Bay, which was the site of the chief fortification in our line of defense at the extreme end of our left flank and also the site of military headquarters on the day of battle. On this hilltop of Fort Green Park, Brooklyn now possesses what is the grandest historic monument in the whole borough, known as the "Prison Ship Martyrs Monument," which has been erected by our patriotic societies to honor the soldiers of the Revolution who died in English prison ships, many of whom fought in the Battle of Long Island. This monument has, however, a very meagre inscription which does not clearly indicate its full purpose and significance to the ordinary observer, but it can be made to serve as a grand monument both to the Battle of Long Island and to our Prison Ship Martyrs by a proper descriptive inscription and without further expense.

The purchase of the land and the erection of the monument to mark the first engagement of the battle on Greenwood's hills being

now provided by a private citizen, it remains only for the people of Brooklyn to acquire some part of the sacred ground on the Gowanus meadows near the mill ponds and the Old Stone House, the site of the last engagement, which is the most important monumental site of all, as here our young Nation was undoubtedly saved at its very borning, and here the two or three hundred heroic Maryland boys laid down their lives for the life of the Nation, which was surely one of the most sacred, heroic and significant events in our whole history.

For this historic purpose it is suggested that the whole block bounded by Fourth and Fifth Avenues and Third and Fourth Streets should be acquired for memorial parking and monumental purposes as soon as possible. On this block the Old Stone House is buried and should be dug up and restored and used as a Museum of Relics of the Battle. With this block there should also be acquired part of the ground near the corner of Seventh Street and Third Avenue, where the Maryland soldiers who fell in the battle were buried. These sites are surely the most sacred in our history and to longer neglect to properly reserve and monument them would seem to be a keen disgrace, in a historic and patriotic sense, not only to the citizens of Brooklyn but to the whole American people. It is therefore hoped that the example set by one citizen of Brooklyn in the purchase of historic land and the erection of a monument to mark the first engagement in our first national battle will be followed by some other citizen or group of citizens or by Municipal, State, or National action, until this site of the last engagement in the battle is reserved and monumented as it should be in view of the impressive fact that, in a historic and patriotic sense, it is the most important and significant spot in our whole city, and is second to no other in the whole country.

To this historic block should be moved the "Maryland Monument" now standing on Lookout Hill in Prospect Park, which is about two miles from the place near the Old Stone House where these heroes fought and fell. There should also be erected on this block a statue of General Stirling, who led the chief fighting in the Battle of Long Island, and fought the first and last engagements, and who is one of the most interesting and significant characters in American history, although little known to our people in general. He is clearly, however, Brooklyn's greatest historic character, as the Battle of Long Island is Brooklyn's greatest historic event; and it is surely time therefore that Brooklyn fully appreciated and fittingly monumented its greatest historic character and event. See portrait and note on page 20.

To this end, in addition to the memorial work above suggested, there should be erected somewhere on the historic block a grand Memorial Arch with this inscription:

TO THE GLORIES OF BROOKLYN AND GOWANUS
THE FIRST BATTLE-GROUND OF THE NATION.
TO THE SAVIORS OF THE NATION WHO
FOUGHT AND FELL HERE AUGUST 27, 1776.

The monumental, historic and patriotic work above suggested with regard to the site of the last engagement in our first National battle is surely a sacred and urgent task to which all our historic and patriotic societies should give themselves wholeheartedly at once.

The cost of acquiring the historic land above described will be over a quarter million, which is, of course, a big task to undertake; but this ground is the most precious in the country in every sense of true Americanism and justifies every proper and necessary outlay and exertion.

In our famous national shrine of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, on July 4, 1776, fifty-five of our leading patriots signed, in ink, the great Document which declared us to be a free and independent Nation, with sublime principles of Liberty and Humanity for all; but, on the historic land above referred to, two to three hundred of our young heroes signed this Declaration *in their blood* and were the first to lay down their lives for the New Nation. Surely, therefore, we have no more sacred and significant shrines anywhere in our country than these two on the hills of Greenwood and the lowlands of Gowanus, which we have heretofore allowed to be so strangely overlooked and forgotten.

PROPOSED MONUMENTAL OBSERVATORY TOWER ON BATTLE HILL

A New Fourth of July Shrine

THE donor of the Monument on Battle Hill, within the cemetery, has also acquired a plot of ground just outside the cemetery, on the corner of Seventh Avenue and Twenty-third Street, one hundred feet square, which he intends to donate to the City, State, or Nation, as a site for a monumental observatory tower like that on Bunker Hill in Boston.

This location gives a much finer and more extended view than that from Bunker Hill and is the most scenic spot in the city, affording magnificent views of Manhattan and Brooklyn, the waters of New York Harbor, with the towering Statue of Liberty, the shores of Staten Island and New Jersey and the lands and waters for miles around from the Atlantic Ocean to the Orange Mountains including a view of the whole battle-ground in what was a much more important battle than Bunker Hill.

It is therefore thought that with the Altar to Liberty within the cemetery on the top of Battle Hill and a monumental tower outside the cemetery on the slope of Battle Hill, which will be more accessible to the general public, that this precious historic spot will be adequately marked and monumented as the place where our first fight was made for National Independence and will thus be a Fourth of July Shrine equal to Independence Hall itself, and a place where the patriotic pilgrim can view a most inspiring scene and drink in important lessons in history and patriotism at the same time.

PRESENTATION OF THE MONUMENT

By the Donor, Chas. M. Higgins

THIS Monument and Altar to Liberty is now presented to the people of Brooklyn, and placed in the care of the Greenwood Cemetery Corporation and the Kings County Historical Society, as a record of the high place of Brooklyn in the history of our Nation and in honor of our first National heroes who fought and fell on this sacred battle-ground to win our National Liberty and Independence and here shed the first blood for this great cause.

This Monument is as much a memorial to the Declaration of Independence, which was our first Charter of Rights and Liberties, as to the Battle of Long Island, which was the first battle of the Nation and the first stroke for the Declaration of Rights in which are expressed and epitomized the principles which form the essence of true Americanism and the basis of our American Government. These principles are in substance, equality of mankind, unalienable rights of the individual, and consent of the governed.

May this Monument and Altar stand forever as a record of, and witness to, the great place of Brooklyn in our National history, which has been almost overlooked or forgotten, and as a perpetual reminder of the grand principles of Americanism expressed in the Declaration, the wisest document ever written, which gives us in one simple paragraph a clear code of basic ethics, civic religion and democratic government, adapted for the just government of all mankind the world over, and which should ever guide us in our political, religious and social life.

THANKS TO ARTISTS OF MONUMENT

JUST here I wish to publicly thank the sculptor Mr. F. Wellington Ruckstull for his artistic, inspiring and devoted work in the modeling of the bronze statue of Minerva, and for his general design of the granite and bronze work on the Altar. To this work he has devoted more than a year of his life to realize the ideals of us both in this matter.

I also wish to thank Mr. Chas. J. Davis, of The Davis Granite Co., for the fine execution of the stonework in the Altar, and for his careful attention to artistic details.

I must also give thanks to the sculptor Mr. Robert G. Eberhard for his artistic modeling of the inscriptions, as well as to the Roman Bronze Works of Brooklyn for the casting of the Statue and inscriptions.

PROGRAMME OF CEREMONIES

MR. CHAS. A. DITMAS, President Kings County Historical Society, Presiding.

Guests will assemble in the Chapel in Greenwood Cemetery near the main entrance at Fifth Avenue and Twenty-fifth Street, Brooklyn, at 2 P.M. sharp. Musical and Memorial Services in Chapel at 2.15 P.M. DR. PAUL MARTIN, Conductor.

1. Opening remarks of Mr. CHAS. A. DITMAS

2. Largo, Handel.....*Organ*

3. Invocation.....*Chaplain Barton Perry, Lt. Col. U. S. A.*

4. America.....*Organ and Quartette*

5. Memorial address in honor of our first National heroes who fought and fell on Greenwood's hills and slopes and there shed the first blood for our National Liberty and Independence
Rev. Chas. Wm. Roeder of Flatlands Dutch Reformed Church, First Church organized in Brooklyn

6. Angels' Serenade, Braga: To spirits of our departed heroes
Soprano, Violin and Organ

7. Chant Seraphique, Guilmant.....*Organ*
"They sing the glory of the brave
In voice of love divine.
For, oh! the patriot's hallowed grave
Is Freedom's holiest shrine."

8. Benediction.....*Dr. Henry Neumann*
Leader Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture

9. Recessional, "Lest We Forget".....*Organ*

10. March from Chapel to Monument on Battle Hill
Dead March from Saul.....*Military Band*

DEDICATION OF MONUMENT ON BATTLE HILL

3 P.M.

11. Introductory Address.....*By Mr. Chas. A. Ditmas* 3 P.M.

12. Presentation of Monument....*By Donor, Mr. Chas M. Higgins* 3.15 P.M.

13. Unveiling of Monument.....*By the Misses Rachel Higgins, Margaret D. Harrison, and Maud Ryder Kouwenhoven* 3.20 P.M.

14. Salute from U. S. Warship in Harbor near Statue of Liberty

15. Trumpet Solo:
Hail Columbia!
Hail Ye Heroes!.....*Group of Trumpeters* 3.25 P.M.

16. Te Deum.....*Quartette* 3.30 P.M.

17. Acceptance of Monument on behalf of Greenwood Corporation
Hon. Russell Benedict 3.35 P.M.

18. Acceptance on behalf of Kings County Historical Society
Hon. George Tiffany 3.40 P.M.

19. Battle Hymn .....*Band* 3.45 P.M.

20. Address.....*Hon. Alfred E. Smith* 3.50 P.M.
Governor State of New York

21. Address .....*Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt* 4.05 P.M.

22. Address: "Art and History"..*Mr. Augustus Thomas* 4.20 P.M.

23. Address: "Americanism: Our duty to understand and cherish it. The Declaration of Independence first fought for on this battleground—the Basis and Code of Americanism"....4.30 P.M.
Hon. David A. Boody, former Mayor of Brooklyn

24. Address: "Brooklyn's High Place in History and Brooklyn's Duty to its own Great Historical Record".....4.45 P.M.
Hon. Wm. M. Calder, U. S. Senator from New York

25. Maryland, My Maryland .....*Band* 5 P.M.

26. Address: "History and Patriotism".....5.05 P.M.
Mr. Sullivan, N. Y. State Historian

27. Finale: "America".....*Band, Quartette and Trumpeters*
Audience is requested to join in the singing

GENERAL STIRLING

The Little-known American Hero

"I have in my last told you, that the fate of this campaign, of course the fate of America, depends upon you, and the army under your command."

From General Washington at Cambridge to General Stirling at New York, March 14, 1776.

GENERAL LORD STIRLING

Brooklyn's Greatest Historic Character.
Born in New York, 1726. Died in Albany, 1783.
Hero of Battle of Long Island,
Brooklyn's Greatest Historic Event

Painted for Chas. M. Higgins by Miss Eleanor C. Bannister, Brooklyn, 1919. From portrait from life by Bass Otis in Independence Hall, and from miniature in the Life of Lord Stirling written by his grandson, William Alexander Duer, published by the New Jersey Historical Society, 1847. See also Life of Lord Stirling, just published by Kings County Historical Society, August, 1920.

STIRLING AND BROOKLYN

"Thermopylæ and Marathon
Still wake the minstrel's lyre;
The deeds of Sparta's lion son
The poet's rage inspire;
But with earth's brightest fields of fame,
Earth's proudest laurelled dead,
Be brightly blazoned Brooklyn's name,
The patriots here who bled.

"Here Freedom fleshed her virgin blade
And found its temper true;
Here on the ranks of Right arrayed
God's blessing down she drew.
Here skilled to foil the foeman's thrust
She proved each chosen son,
And worthy found of holiest trust
Stirling and Washington."

From First Prize Poem. P. J. C.

INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE

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